

# The Miami Herald

## UP FRONT | ETIQUETTE

Thank-you notes, a dying trend?

**Do's and don'ts expert Elena Brouwer says thank-you notes are a dying trend and their loss helps to create an impersonal and impolite society.**

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Now that you've unwrapped, unpacked and perhaps even returned or re-given all those Christmas and Hanukkah presents, it's time to sit down and write those thank-you notes.

Thank-you notes?

Even a representative for the Washington, D.C.-based Greeting Card Association laughs at the thought of receiving them.

"Yeah, right," said Mila Albertson, membership services director of the Greeting Card Association, a trade organization that represents about 275 companies.

"I'm not going to hold my breath for my nieces and nephews to write thank-you notes," Albertson said, laughing. "Even though they should, a lot of people don't think about that."

So few, in fact, that the Greeting Card Association doesn't even keep track of how many thank-you notecards are produced or purchased.

Still, Etiquette 101 consultants will tell you to sign, seal and deliver those notes to keep society from becoming more impersonal and impolite.

"It seems people are taking the easy way out by thanking people by e-mail," said Hollywood-based etiquette consultant **Elena Brouwer**. "The proper way is writing a note. People like to get mail addressed to them and thanking them for the effort that they took."

**Brouwer's** former student, Jonathan Elkaim, 12, a seventh-grader at Pembroke Pines Charter Middle School, said he will send out one thank-you note. But he will wait until next summer to deliver it in person to the family friend from Canada who sent him a remote-control helicopter for Christmas.

"It's going to be a while, but she will remember," Jonathan said. "I never really mail things out."

That's not what **Brouwer** teaches.

She recommends sending cards within a week of receiving a present.

Courtesy or politeness may seem like a dying trend. But many are paying to revive it...

...Even Miami Beach lawyer Jonathan Kroner, 47, needed a little brushing up. He hired **Brouwer** about two years ago. Among the lessons:

"When someone toasts you, you don't raise your own glass. You don't drink to yourself," Kroner said.

As for thank-you notes, Kroner said: "I know what I should do, but my reality doesn't live up to my good intentions."

He said he has a carton of handwritten notes that remain unsent. "I do more e-mail and telephonic thank-you's than I would want."

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